

Dear Parent or Guardian:

From April 3-7, students in 5th grade will take the South Dakota Science Assessment. The purpose of this letter is to give you an understanding of the test. It will also give you a few ideas for helping your student do her/his best on the test.

The South Dakota Science Assessment measures student achievement in relation to our new state standards that were adopted in May 2015. As the test is organized around new standards, this spring will be a field test of new items and content organization.-This means that reporting, if any, will be limited since standards for comparison cannot be determined until after testing is complete. Any results will be raw scores with no levels of achievement.

Your child will take the tests on a computer. These tests are not timed, but we estimate that it will take a similar amount of time as did past assessments. We estimate the assessment will take 1.5 - 2 hours.

The new content standards set higher expectations for students. This means that expectations for student achievement are higher than they used to be. As a result, it is likely that fewer students will score at the higher achievement levels on the assessments, especially the first few years. These results do not mean that schools are performing worse or that students are learning less. The scores represent a new baseline that provides a more accurate indicator for educators, students, and parents. Our school is working to make sure that students can meet the challenge of these new standards and succeed in high school and beyond.

While your child's grades will not be impacted by their performance on this assessment, this assessment serves as a way for the school to see how well we are helping students meet rigorous learning standards.

There is no need to study in preparation for the assessments. We do, however ask that you encourage your children to do their best and get plenty of rest the night before the assessment. It is important that you make sure your child comes to school on days that he/she has tests. Making up a missed test means time out of class and losing important learning time that cannot be made up.

Information about the assessment can be found at <http://doe.sd.gov/Assessment/Science.aspx> .

This testing is very important for your child, Freedom Elementary, and the Harrisburg School District. Thank you for supporting your child and our school during the test. Please call if you have any questions. We know that , Freedom Elementary's students will help us show what our students know and can do.

Sincerely,

Tanja Pederson
School Principal